


## Nebraska Book Festival Set for April 25 at UNO

*T*he next **Nebraska Book Festival** will be held April 25 in the Weitz Community Engagement Center at the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). The festival is free and open to everyone who wishes to meet, hear, and talk with some of Nebraska's many talented authors who published new works in 2014.

Participating authors will answer questions from the audience, be available for book signing, and attend the concluding reception. The festival will include workshops with opportunities for writers to discuss their craft and receive feedback from award-winning authors. The Nebraska Center for the Book will present the Mildred Bennett Award to an individual for significant contributions to fostering the literary tradition in Nebraska. The Nebraska Book Festival is presented by the

Book, Humanities Nebraska, Nebraska Library Commission, and University of Nebraska Press.

Attend the festival at the Weitz Community Engagement Center, University of Nebraska Omaha, 6401 Dodge Street, Room 115. Keep up with the Festival at [www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival](http://www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival) and [bookfestival.nebraska.gov](http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov).

For more information contact Mary Ellen Ducey, [mducey2@unl.edu](mailto:mducey2@unl.edu), 402-472-5076. 

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

#### Writers Workshops . . . . . 9:30 -11:30 a.m.

Lucy Adkins: *"Poetry and Inspiration: Imaginative Ways to Write Your Best"*

Mary Avidano: *"Poems by You"*

Attendees are invited to bring a poem they've written.

Traci Robison: *"From Draft to Digital: How to Prepare and What to Expect as a Self-Publisher"*

Laura Wiseman: *"You're No Body Until Some Body Loves You: Writing the Body"*

#### Readings. . . . . Noon - 3:30 p.m.

Mark Langan, *Busting Bad Guys: My True Crime Stories of Bookies, Drug Dealers and Ladies of the Night* (MTL838, LLC) . . . . . 12:00-12:30 p.m.

Marsha Davis, *One Man's Voice* . . . . . 12:30-1:00 p.m.

Sydney Olson, *The Curse of the Fates* (XLIBRIS) . . . . . 1:15-1:45 p.m.

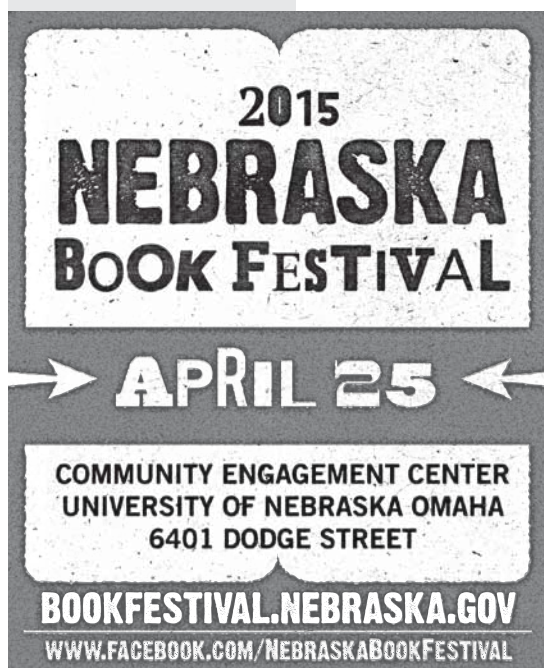
John Price, *The Tallgrass Prairie Reader* (University Of Iowa Press) . 1:45-2:15 p.m.

Timothy Schaffert, *The Swan Gondola: A Novel* (Riverhead) . . . . . 2:30-3:00 p.m.

Karen Shoemaker, *The Meaning of Names* (Red Hen Press) . . . . . 3-3:30 p.m.

#### Mildred Bennett Award Presentation . . . . . 3:30 p.m.

#### Reception . . . . . 3:45-5:00 p.m.



# Honoring our Nebraska Writers and Publishers

Editorial by  
Mary Jo Ryan,  
Nebraska Library  
Commission

As we embark on another round of the Nebraska Book Awards competition, I'm staggered by the list of books that have been honored in the past sixteen years and by the wonderful volunteers that have served as judges and helped with the administrative details. The


Nebraska Book Awards competition was an idea germinated in a Nebraska Center for the Book board meeting and nourished by the efforts of board members like Jerry Kromberg, Rod Wagner, and Dee Yost.

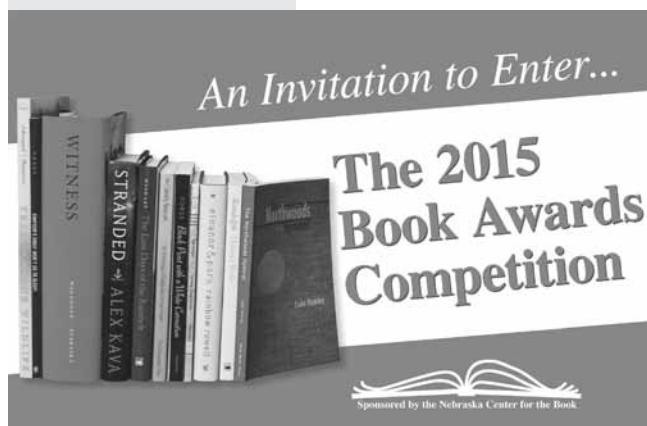
It gives us a unique opportunity to lift up and celebrate the best literary offerings in the past year—books with a Nebraska connection that fit in the following categories: Anthology, Children/Young Adult, Cover/Design/Illustration, Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry.

The field of entries has grown each year, from thirty in 2000 to ninety-seven in 2014, with a total of more than seven hundred entries over the

past fifteen years. The amazing books honored range from the first Poetry Award Winner, *Bones of a Very Fine Hand* by Marjorie Saiser (Backwaters Press) to the most recent Young Adult Fiction winner, *Eleanor & Park* by Rainbow Rowell (St. Martin's Griffin). With many more varied and wonderful reads between. A complete list of winners is available at <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards/winners/nebook.html>.

Thanks so much to those who volunteer to serve as judges and read all those books. We know it is often a very difficult decision, with lots of discussion and even some contention. We are all enormously proud of all our Nebraska writers, especially the Nebraska Book Award honorees.

Now it's time to recognize another batch of books. We invite you to nominate books that are written by Nebraska authors, published by Nebraska publishers, set in Nebraska, or concerning Nebraska. The Awards competition is now open and entries are due by June 30. Books published in 2014, as indicated by the copyright date, are eligible for nomination. They must be bound and have an ISBN number. See <http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov/awards/nebookawards.html> for details on eligibility and a nomination form and please submit a nomination today. 



The NCB News

Spring 2015 | Volume 25 | No. 1

## Nebraska Center for the Book Board and Committees

### Executive Committee

Mary Ellen Ducey, President; Lois Meyer, Secretary; Donna Kennedy Marvin, Treasurer

### Funding/Membership

Donna Kennedy Marvin; Suzanne Wise

### Nebraska Book Festival

Mary Ellen Ducey; Erika Hamilton; Chuck Johanningsmeier

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Becky Faber; Lois Meyer; Nancy Johnson; Donna Kennedy Marvin; Cathy Mohnike

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### Publications/Publicity

Mary Ellen Ducey; Molly Fisher; Chuck Johanningsmeier; Christine Walsh; Mary Jo Ryan (Nebraska Library Commission staff representative)

### Awards Art Coordinator

Mary Jo Ryan

### Letters About Literature Coordinator

Laureen Riedesel

Nebraska Library Commission Director Rod Wagner is an ex-officio member of all committees.

### 2015 Nebraska Center for the Book Board Meeting

April 25 . . . . . 10:00 a.m.,  
University of  
Nebraska Omaha

### Advertising

The NCB News can accept up to four 1/8-page ads for each issue. The advertising rate is \$125 for 1/8-page. NCB News is issued March 15, June 15 and October 15. The advertising and copy deadline is six weeks prior to issue date. For details, contact Mary Jo Ryan, Nebraska Center for the Book, The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120, Lincoln, NE 68508-2023; phone 402-471-3434, 800-307-2665, e-mail: [maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov](mailto:maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov), [centerforthebook.nebraska.gov](http://centerforthebook.nebraska.gov)

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Editor: Mary Jo Ryan

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Staff: Janet Greser, Mary Sauers

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## 2015 One Book One Nebraska Underway

The 2015 One Book One Nebraska selection is *Death Zones and Darling Spies: Seven Years of Vietnam War Reporting* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013) by Beverly Deepe Keever, who was born and raised in Hebron, NE. Keever was the longest-serving American correspondent covering the Vietnam War and earned a Pulitzer Prize nomination for her reporting. She received a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a doctorate from the University of Hawaii, where she is currently professor emerita. In *Death Zones and Darling Spies*, Keever describes what it was like for a farm girl from Nebraska to find herself halfway around the world, trying to make sense of one of the nation's bloodiest and bitterest wars.

On January 14, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts proclaimed **2015 as One Book One Nebraska: Nebraska Reads *Death Zones & Darling Spies: Seven Years of Vietnam War Reporting***.

This program promotes a culture of reading and discussion in Nebraska by bringing the state together around one great book by a Nebraska author. This year marks eleven years of the program sponsored by Nebraska Center for the Book, Humanities Nebraska, University of Nebraska Press, and Nebraska Library Commission.

Libraries across Nebraska will join other literary and cultural organizations in planning book discussions, activities, and events that will encourage Nebraskans to read and discuss this book. To borrow book club kits, ask your library to contact Nebraska Library Commission Information Services, [nlc.ask@nebraska.gov](mailto:nlc.ask@nebraska.gov), 800-307-2665 or 402-471-4016. For more information see <http://onebook.nebraska.gov> or <http://www.facebook.com/onebookonenebraska>. Contact Mary Jo Ryan, [maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov](mailto:maryjo.ryan@nebraska.gov) to have your event posted. 

Attending the proclamation-signing ceremony were (l. to r.): Donna Kennedy Marvin, Erika Hamilton, Chris Sommerich, Rod Wagner, Gov. Pete Ricketts, Mary Ellen Ducey, Martyn Beeny, and Rebecca Faber, representing the Nebraska Center for the Book, Nebraska Library Commission, Humanities Nebraska, and University of Nebraska Press. Also present representing the 40th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon Commemoration Committee was Nate Blum.

### What is the Nebraska Center for the Book?

The Nebraska Center for the Book brings together the state's readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars to build the community of the book. We are the people who know and love books, and who value the richness they bring to our lives. Our Nebraska Center supports programs to celebrate and stimulate public interest in books, reading, and the written word. We have been an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress since 1990.

### Join the Nebraska Center for the Book

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name/address of a friend who might be interested in NCB membership: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \$15 Individual Membership ☐ \$25 Organizational Membership ☐ Additional Contribution

*Contributions above \$15 are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

**Please send this form and a check to: Nebraska Center for the Book  
The Atrium, 1200 N Street, Suite 120 • Lincoln, NE 68508-2023**





## American Life in Poetry: Column 507



by Ted Kooser,  
U.S. Poet Laureate,  
2004-2006

For every one of those faces pictured on the obituary page, thousands of memories have been swept out of the world, never to be recovered. I encourage everyone to write down their memories before it's too late. Here's a fine example of that by Margaret Hasse, who lives in Minnesota.

### Truant

Our high school principal wagged his finger over two manila folders lying on his desk, labeled with our names—my boyfriend and me—called to his office for skipping school.


The day before, we ditched Latin and world history to chase shadows of clouds on a motorcycle. We roared down rolling asphalt roads through the Missouri River bottoms beyond town, our heads emptied of review tests and future plans.

We stopped on a dirt lane to hear a meadowlark's liquid song, smell

heart-break blossom of wild plum.

Beyond leaning fence posts and barbwire, a tractor drew straight lines across the field unfurling its cape of blackbirds.

Now forty years after that geography lesson in spring, I remember the principal's words. How right he was in saying: This will be part of your permanent record.

American Life in Poetry is made possible by The Poetry Foundation ([www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org)), publisher of *Poetry* magazine. It is also supported by the Department of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Poem copyright ©2013 by Margaret Hasse, from her most recent book of poems, *Earth's Appetite*, Nodin Press, 2013. Poem reprinted by permission of Margaret Hasse and the publisher. Introduction copyright © 2014 by The Poetry Foundation. The introduction's author, Ted Kooser, served as United States Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 2004-2006. We do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. 


## The Bookworm Honored

Sharon Bishop (l.) presents the Jane Pope Geske Award to Nancy Rips, representing The Bookworm Bookstore.



At the November Celebration of Nebraska Books, the **2014 Jane Geske Award** was presented to Omaha's The Bookworm Bookstore for an exceptional contribution to literacy, books, reading, libraries, or literature in

Nebraska. The Bookworm was cited for twenty-eight years of service to the Omaha reading community, encouraging, nurturing, and supporting books, readers, and writers. The store also brings in authors from around the world to interact with the public through readings and book signings and works closely with the Omaha Public Library, helping to support library events and projects, providing books for author events, and co-sponsoring an annual service project.

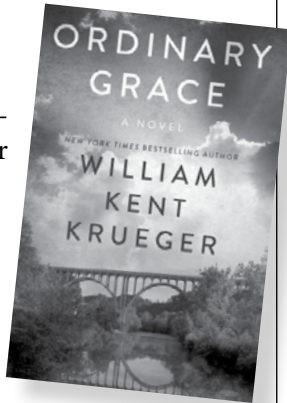
The Jane Geske Award commemorates Geske's passion for books and was established in recognition of her contributions to the well-being of the libraries of Nebraska. Jane Pope Geske was a founding member of the Nebraska Center for the Book, former director of the Nebraska Library Commission, and a long-time leader in Nebraska library and literary activities. 



# What Are You Reading?

Nebraska Center for the Book board members share their thoughts about the books they are reading.

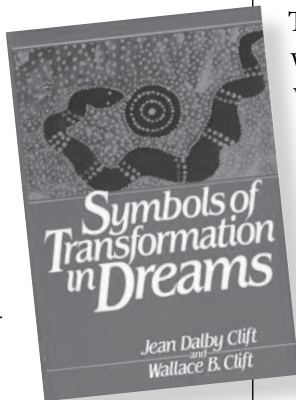
My favorite 2014 read is *Ordinary Grace: A Novel* (Atria Books, 2014) by William Kent Krueger. Krueger is known for his mysteries featuring Cork O'Connor, and I like those as well, but this book is not a part of that series. Set in a small town in Minnesota, it tells the story of two curious boys growing up, the many life lessons they encounter—which includes the death of their sister. It is a story of hope and assurance. Having first read the book in the spring, I recently reread it for my book group, and I will probably read it again. Beautiful!



**Molly Fisher**

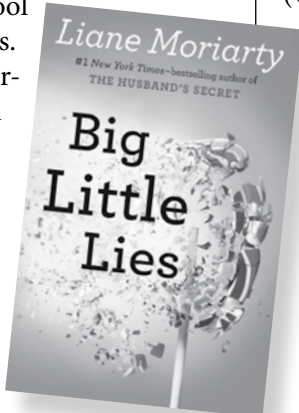
I just finished reading *Symbols of Transformation in Dreams* by Jean Dalby Clift and Wallace B. Clift (Crossroad Publishing, 1993), an interesting look at the symbolic language of dreams as applied to various arts, Jungian analysis, and individual transformation.

**Neil Harrison**



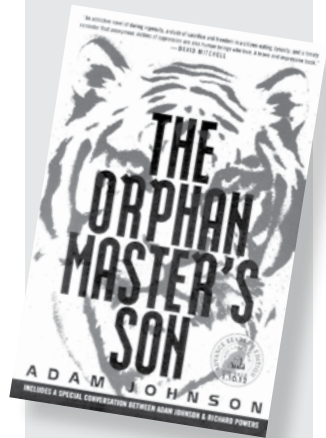
I am listening to *Big Little Lies* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 2014) by Liane Moriarty. Set in Pirriwee, Australia near the beach, parents of students in kindergarten attend a school trivia night and someone dies. Several mothers give their version of events, complete with snarky talk and scandalous behavior. I still can't determine who died, but some of the mothers are living lives which aren't always truthful. Love the Australian accent.

**Sherry Houston**



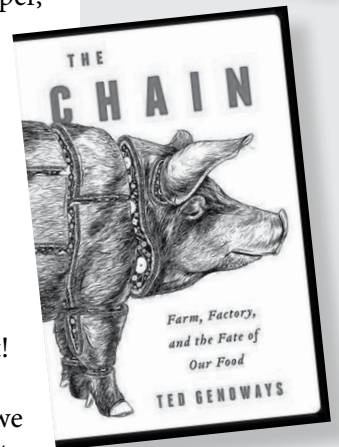
I am reading the *The Orphan Master's Son: A Novel* (Random House, 2012) by Adam Johnson. This is an excellent read. It is informative and quite disturbingly eye-opening to the oppression and despair heaped upon the citizens of North Korea.

**Donna J. Kennedy Marvin**



I recently read *In the House of I Am* (2014), a wonderful memoir by Mary Avidano, a Nebraska poet and author. I'm also reading *The Chain: Farm, Factory, and the Fate of Our Food* (Harper, 2014) by Ted Genoways, another Nebraska writer. This book reminds the reader of an earlier expose of food and immigrant labor, Sinclair's *The Jungle* (Dover, 2001).

**Lois Meyer**



As a longtime Longmire fan, I was distressed when A&E announced that because Longmire's audience "skewed too old for the network," they would not be renewing. What! They just were going to leave all of the fans with that cliff-hanger! Maybe they thought we would all be dead before the start of the next season anyway. Well, you cannot cancel a book so I'm forgoing the tube and reading *Wait for Signs: Twelve Longmire Stories* (Viking, 2014) by Craig Johnson. In this busy Christmas season, they are just the right length for a quick read. And just like this season's family gatherings, the stories are full of characters I love spending time with.

**Cathy Mohnike**



I'm reading the 2015 One Book One Nebraska selection, *Death Zones and Darling Spies: Seven Years of Vietnam War Reporting* (University of Nebraska Press, 2013) by Beverly Deepe Kever. It is a remarkable account of life, politics, and war in Vietnam from the United States' early involvement and into the commitment of many thousands of U.S. troops during Kever's seven years of reporting there.

**Rod Wagner** 📖




## Review:

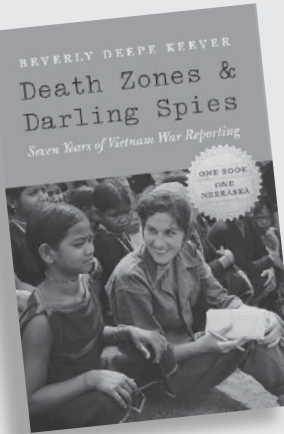
Reviewed by  
Ron Meyer, Lincoln

## Death Zones & Darling Spies: Seven Years of Vietnam War Reporting

by Beverly Deepe Kever  
University of Nebraska Press, 2013  
ISBN: 978-0803222618

I am writing this from the perspective of an adult looking back to when I was a nineteen-year-old combat Marine in Vietnam (1966-67). (I grew up about thirty miles west of Ms. Kever's home near Hebron, and could have unknowingly crossed paths with the author in Khe Sanh.) I found this book to be a fascinating, engaging read, and difficult to put down. Her

in-depth reporting about many of those affected by the Vietnam War is journalism at its best. Being in country for seven years allowed Ms. Deepe Kever an understanding of the culture and the people of Vietnam that was too often ignored by U.S. policy makers. Or, they were blinded by American hubris. I have read other journalists' accounts of the Vietnam War; *Death Zones & Darling Spies* joins their voices in reinforcing the truth that wars of invasion and occupation end badly for the invaders and occupiers. 



## Lost Writers of the Plains


by Wendy Katz,  
University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln

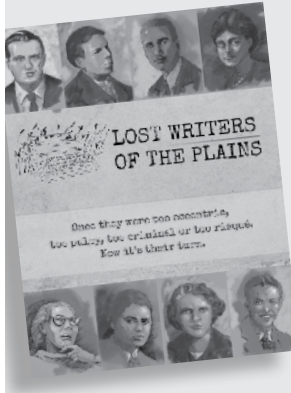
An author who had a stroke when she got a bad review; a stark realist censored by an anxious Dean; a playwright who had to change his name; a bohemian poet in the middle of Kansas; a scholar dedicated to African American literature when no one else was; a jack-of-all-trades who wound up in jail; a woman who gave up writing for medicine; an Orientalist who fell out of favor; these are the Lost Writers. Men and women who once were poised for or even achieved a degree of fame, but who have become lost to contemporary readers not because of their own merits (or lack of them!), but because of a variety of historical circumstances.

Though they hail from places ranging from Minnesota to Texas to Poland, each author has a strong Plains connection in his or her life or work, and often specifically with Nebraska. Margaret Haughwout, though she spent most of her life in Kansas, and Ervin Krause, who died in Hawaii, were born in the state; Bertram Austin Lewis, W. Zolley Lerner, and La Selle Gilman graduated from the University of Nebraska; and Dorothy Thomas and Earl Guy—he owned a restaurant in Hastings—lived and worked here. Faye Cashatt Lewis is the only exception, but even she published in the University of Nebraska's literary journal *Prairie Schooner*, as did all the writers.

Each of these authors will get a chance to shine (again) in a series of radio essays airing on NET Radio starting March 6, during *Friday Live*

(Fridays at 9:00 a.m.), *Weekend Edition* (Saturdays at 9:35 a.m.), and *All Things Considered* (Sundays at 4:35 p.m.). If you miss the radio broadcast, you can listen on the companion website ([www.netNebraska.org/lostwriters](http://www.netNebraska.org/lostwriters)) or download the **free iBook** from iTunes. Both the web and the iBook offer additional features: critical and historical essays, photographs, documents, and video commentary on the authors from contemporary writers such as Ted Kooser (former United States Poet Laureate), Kwame Dawes (editor of *Prairie Schooner*), and Nebraska author Timothy Schaffert, as well as scholars like David Wishart (author of several prizewinning books, including *An Unspeakable Sadness: The Dispossession of the Nebraska Indians*) and Rick Edwards, whose scholarship on homesteading has attracted Presidential interest.

The iBook has the bonus of containing a complete audio book: readings of works by all the authors, suitable for iPods. The audio readings as well as the authors' original stories in *Prairie Schooner* are also available on the website. But in a world in which most ebooks are simply scanned print books, the *Lost Writers of the Plains* free iBook is interactive, and offers a rare experience: adult non-fiction and fiction enhanced with completely integrated sound, video and images. *Lost Writers* is a collaboration between NET Radio, the Center for Great Plains Studies and *Prairie Schooner*. For more information, please contact [wkatz2@unl.edu](mailto:wkatz2@unl.edu). 





## Reading at the end of 2014

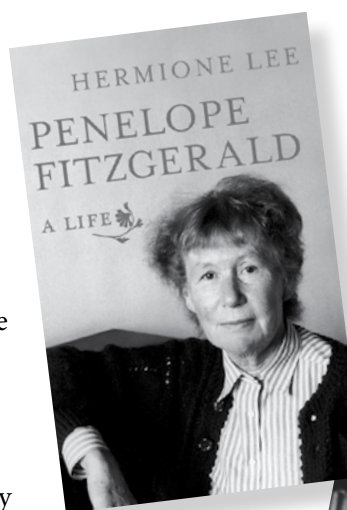
Loading up on books on books in the early 2000s I read Penelope Fitzgerald's first novel, *The Bookshop* (Mariner, 2013), followed by *Offshore: A Novel* (Mariner, 2014) and *Human Voice* (Mariner, 2013). The English locale and her style engaged me. She died in 2000. Winner of two Man Booker Prizes and American National Book Critics Award, she was touted by some as England's leading 20th century novelist.

I usually sleep late on Christmas, eat Chinese food and go to the movies; but not in 2014. Instead, I treated myself to Fitzgerald's much lauded biography, *Penelope Fitzgerald, A Life* (Knopf, 2014) by Hermione Lee. The Bookworm's sole copy was spoken for. Barnes & Noble Crossroads referred me to their Oakview Mall store, which had two copies. I paid retail. No looking online for bargains or an autographed copy (abebooks, \$140).

It is a delight to see new words. Lee's harvest included pierrots, De Morgan Tiles, oast house, winkle-pickers, pumpship, frowsty, shambolic, frails, pollarded, plangent, finical, tranche, gilts, châtelaine, meiosis, and Bostik. Of curse [stet] I went to Google wondering if there is

a difference in memory retention between instantaneous Internet results and opening the about-to-be unconventional printed dictionary or encyclopaedia.

This critical and inspiring biography is a must read for the beginner, novice and aspiring writer, professional and successful writer, and retired, washed up, disappointed, and has-been writer. I am looking forward to reading Fitzgerald's last novel, *The Blue Flower: A Novel* (Mariner, 2014). Dear NCB News readers, please also pay attention to *The Paying Guests* (Riverhead, 2014) by Sarah Walter and *Splitting an Order* (Copper Canyon Press, 2014) by Ted Kooser—both gratifying explorations of the human condition. By the way George Gissing published *The Paying Guest* (Kessinger Publishing, 2010) in 1895 and Hermione Lee uses the expression at least three times. 



by Oliver B. Pollak,  
Omaha


## Nebraska Writers Guild Spring Conference Set for April

The Nebraska Writers Guild (NWG) plans and hosts two conferences each year—one in the spring and one in the fall. Each year the Guild's membership grows, and our current strong and progressive board keeps "one-upping" themselves with each conference. The spring conference on April 10-11, 2015 will feature outstanding A-list speakers and agents, and a new location at the LaVista Conference Center near Omaha.

As always, the Guild provides opportunities at their conferences for NWG members to pitch to literary agents. This year's spring conference will feature Deidre Knight, from the Knight Agency, and Michael Carr, from the Veritas Literary Agency. Other speakers will include book-marketing specialist, Tim Grahl, author of *Your First 1,000 Copies*; Editor and Online Community Manager of ScriptMag.com Jeanne Veillette;

and Career Coach for professional and emerging screenwriters, Lee Jessup.

For more detailed information about these speakers, visit the NWG website at <http://www.nebraskawriters.org>. Registration for the conference is now open. Early registration is \$65 for members and \$85 for nonmembers. After April 1, registration is \$85.

Writers should consider becoming a member of the NWG to be part of the growth and positive energy in this organization. The NWG inspires and helps authors network and learn about the craft of writing, as it has done since formed in 1925 by the likes of Mari Sandoz, Willa Cather, and Bess Streeter Aldrich. Anyone interested in renewing or joining the Guild can do so on the Guild's website at <http://www.nebraskawriters.org>. Annual dues are \$35. 

by Gina M. Barlean,  
Nebraska Writers  
Guild



# Apollo's Laurel in Nebraska: A Little Back Story

by Charles A. Peek,  
Professor Emeritus,  
University of  
Nebraska Kearney

George Snow with his  
legislative staff when  
he was Secretary of the  
Senate, (2nd from r.,  
front row).



A year ago, I had the privilege of serving on the Ad Hoc committee to recommend to the Governor of Nebraska a new State Poet. I had no idea at the time our family had been involved in this once before. Shortly after this, however, my wife, the former Nancy Resler, discovered a bit of a treasure amongst what we jokingly call the “next to the largest archive” in the state—our boxes of family memorabilia.

The first installment of the treasure was an item Nancy’s mother, Mildred Snow Resler, had clipped from the *Lincoln Journal Star*. The clipping was the January 27, 1974, column of Helen Haggie entitled “The Arts of Living.” The headline for this issue’s column read “Poets Laureate Unpaid; Many States Lack Them.” We were intrigued—why would Mildred have kept this particular clipping? We soon discovered the answer in this paragraph: “The late Mr. Neihardt was named Nebraska’s poet laureate when George C. Snow of Dawes county introduced into the state House of Representatives and Senate (the legislature was bicameral at the time) a concurrent resolution that Mr. Neihardt be named. Gov. Samuel McKelvie signed the unanimously passed resolution.” George C. Snow was Nancy’s mother’s father and a prominent Nebraska figure.

Subsequent research discovered the Laureate Address given by John G. Neihardt. (Finally, something not in our archive! How did we miss this?) Neihardt’s address itself is preceded by the announcement that “On April 18th, 1921, the Senate and House of Representatives of the Nebraska Legislature passed a joint and concurrent resolution naming John G. Neihardt Poet Laureate of Nebraska . . . the official notification ceremony . . . was held in the Temple Theatre at

Lincoln.” There follows the account of the introductory remarks of the Chancellor’s representative, Dean Sherman, who stated that “No other state, it appears, has, by legislative recognition, a poet laureate. No other state, we may fairly say, has such a reason.” No wonder he could compare the occasion with those celebrations in which “the sons of Apollo were crowned publicly with his laurel.” A subsequent newspaper article (possibly from the *Chadron Journal* and, if so, likely written by its editor, George Snow) notes that “It was only after he had for years been called back and forth across the continent to read and lecture in the principal universities and culture clubs on both coasts that the people of Nebraska began to realize that they had a real genius living in their midst.”

George C. Snow died August 11, 1942. Among other deceased legislators, Snow was memorialized by the 56th Session of the Nebraska Legislature in Resolution 42, signed by long-time Clerk Hugo Srb. The memorial singled Snow out as a “recognized . . . leader and . . . a man possessed of high intellectual attainments.”

The title of Poet Laureate was retired with Neihardt’s passing; the honor now comes with the title State Poet. Titles notwithstanding, I imagine that both Neihardt and Snow would have been proud to see what they began continue with the late and inimitable Bill Kloefkorn and the current State Poet, Twyla Hansen. I know we are proud of our family’s roles in launching the position and continuing the tradition of Poet Laureate/State Poet. Oh, yes—most states now have one. And they are still much or totally unpaid!

**Ed. Note:** This article originally ran in the author’s blog at [CAPeek.wordpress.com](http://CAPeek.wordpress.com). 



## More New Teen Books

I have always enjoyed teens and working with teens. What makes my job at Omaha Public Library so great is that I get a chance to work with my favorite group, teenagers. The Teen Advisory Board (TAB) is an amazing group. It is made up of teenagers who volunteer their time to come up with new ideas for teen programs so we can attract more teens to our library. And we have fun too. This is one of the most amazing groups I have ever worked with. Many of them started when they were in seventh grade, and they are juniors and seniors in high school. We meet monthly and they come in pretty excited and enthusiastic. They are talented, smart, and creative. Our leaders are Samuel, Leon, Jalilya, Janidu, Donavon, and Sarah, plus a supporting cast of approximately ten more teens who serve on the board. We have just finished planning for our teen summer programs and a sample of the new programs includes: donut making, chess tournament, zumba fitness, creative writing, severe weather, casino games and candy poker, college entrance essays, dance competition, and Star Wars gaming. The TAB not only comes up with ideas for teen programming, they also present programs. This summer they will be in charge of impromptu acting, creative writing, "Minute to Win It," and all the lock-ins, including a Star Wars lock-in with a competition between the Storm Troopers and the Jedi Knights. Their favorite lock-in is the Nerf® competition where teens play capture the flag and many other games in an after-hours party.



This takes place throughout the library with the lights off, and it is great fun!

### New teen books include:

*Heir of Fire* (Bloomsbury, 2014) by Sarah Maas. Calaena is the king's assassin and she starts to train with Rowan, who becomes a real friend to her because he can help her restore magic back to her home in Ardarlan and defeat the evil king.



*Michael Vey 4: Hunt For Jade Dragon* (Simon Pulse/Mercury Ink, 2014) by Richard Paul Evans.

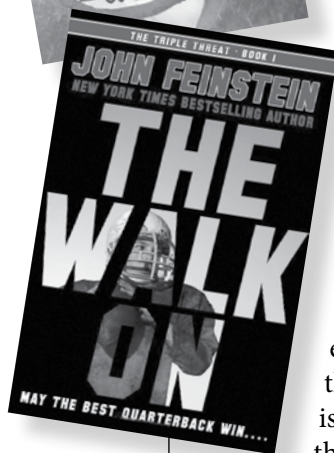
Michael Vey and his electric friends try to rescue Jade Dragon because she is the key to evil Dr. Hatch taking over the world. This is currently one of the most popular books checked out at our branch.



*Strike* (Razorbill, 2014) by D. J. MacHale. Tucker and his friends try to survive in a very deadly labor camp run by the Retros and everything changes when they investigate the mysterious dome located in the middle of the base. For one teen at our branch, this was one of the books he most looked forward to at the end of the year.



*The Summer I Saved The World In 65 Days* (Wendy Lamb Books, 2014) by Michele Weber Hurwitz. Would you like to make a difference in our world? This book tells you how.



*The Walk On* (Knopf, 2014) by John Feinstein. High School freshman and newcomer Alex Meyers expects to start as quarterback for the varsity football team, and yes, he is that good. But the current starter is the coach's son. 📖

by Paul  
Christopherson,  
Omaha Public  
Library



## Review:

Reviewed by  
Charles A. Peek,  
Professor Emeritus,  
University of  
Nebraska Kearney

## Deep Map Country: Literary Cartography of the Great Plains

by Susan Naramore Maher  
University of Nebraska Press, 2014  
ISBN: 978-0803245020

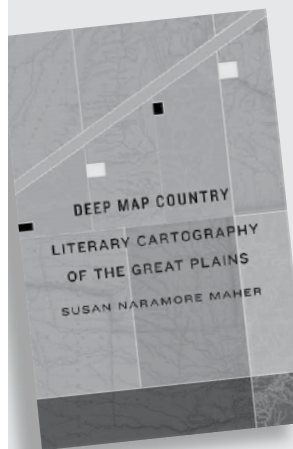
History is a place where myth and reality often collide, and the Great Plains is a place where those collisions are sometimes blindingly vivid. Page by page, this becomes even more abundantly clear in one of the best books I've read in a decade, Sue Maher's *Deep Map Country*.

Maher's take on the Great Plains finds an emblem in the John Raimondi sculpture, "Erma's Desire," at an I-80 rest stop. Commissioned as part of Nebraska's Bicentennial celebration (one of the few pieces of the national celebration to last!), Erma rests where myth positioned these plains simply as (loaded phrase) "the way west," but her angularity points in many directions, both horizontal and vertical. Erma, Maher tells readers, represents a compelling desire "for many stories, not a master story, many view-points and dimensions." It is this complexity, this many-ness, this being defined by both "restlessness and placed-ness," that lies at the heart of the writing Maher explores.

There is nothing narrow or one-dimensional about Maher's focus—she probes our writers to show us how surveying and story-telling both discover certain kinds of territory and heritage,

and not others. She draws from many essays myriad ways of perceiving who and where we are. She culls out the significance of tales of how we've battled elements (weather? prejudice?), often with inadequate tools (too little science? too much?), tales of the ways we've been on the move—and ways we've never budged. By looking at a wide variety of writings, she explores the occupation of "excavating Time and Space," to find how familiarity with the very rock and organic life we live with can help us uncover "Layers of Presence" that, wittingly or unwittingly, continue to shape our history, our lives.

The investigations of *Deep Map Country* cover most of the major writers who have explored the temporal and spatial dimensions of the Great Plains, often presented to the reader in a format that juxtaposes one set of ideas with sometimes complementary, sometimes challenging view-points. From this dialogue of ideas, Maher draws rare insight; to it she brings a comprehensive vision that allows a reader to see the works as a whole. Think of these names (just a sampling): Wallace Stegner, William Least Heat-Moon, Don Gayton, Wes Jackson, Loren Eiseley, John McPhee, Julene Bair, Sharon Butala, Linda Hasselstrom, and Robert Thacker. If their work has ever interested you or if you have ever felt like finding out what they are doing, Maher's study is a must read for your library. 📖



## North Omaha African-American History

by Oliver B. Pollak,  
Omaha

Two books about North Omaha appeared in 2014. Amy Forss published *Black Print with a White Carnation, Mildred Brown and the Omaha Star Newspaper, 1938-1989* (University of Nebraska Press) and Matt Holland published *Ahead of Their Time, The Story of the Omaha DePorres Club* (CreateSpace). Both books, through the vehicle

of biography, provide valuable and interesting reading. The stories of Mildred Brown; Fr. John Markoe, a Jesuit at Creighton University; and Creighton student and community organizer Denny Holland add immeasurably to our understanding and appreciation of the struggle against racism in the Midwest. Covering the second half of the 20th century, these scholars rely on printed material and oral interviews. Forss and Holland are to be praised for exposing the struggle for equal rights in Omaha. 📖



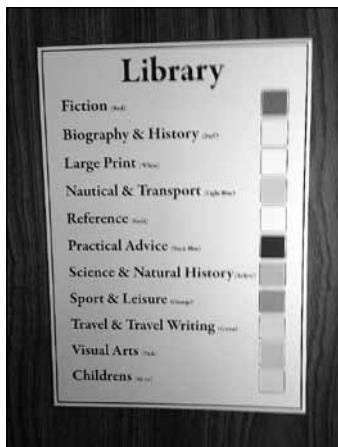


## Books Ahoy: October 2014

We arrived at the Omaha airport with the Sunday *New York Times*, two *Time* magazines, a *New Yorker*, some professional reading, and Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveler* (Everyman's Library, 1993)—to reread—in tow. Hearing and reading fine reviews of *The Paying Guests* (Riverhead, 2014) by Sarah Watson, I purchased it at Hudson Booksellers.

I'm a landlubber, but Teofilo Ruiz accompanying the UCLA Alumni cruise swayed me. I read his life affirming *The Terror of History: On the Uncertainties of Life in Western Civilization* (Princeton University Press, 2014). One of my Navy duties in the mid-1960s, aboard the 4,000-ton USS Sumner County LST 1148 (Landing Ship Tank), was ship's librarian. The crew of 110 had few readers, though some had "Hong Kong fuck books" and pirated best sellers. Seasickness disabled concentration and fruitful reading for almost two years. I still have the ship's copy of *The Last Confucian* (Penguin, 1964) by Denis Warner, about the fall of South Vietnam's Catholic President Ngo Dinh Diem. Military base and shipboard library programs are long-standing. Library service encouraged moral uplift, education, and the avoidance of boredom and other vices.

The ship had fine restaurants, and adjacent to the cruise ship library, The Barista Coffee Bar, fount of espressos, cappuccinos, and lattes. The 53 well-crafted wood bookshelves held about 2,500 books. Most had glass doors. The hushed, carpeted enclave, with a paneled ceiling and recessed lighting emphasized clubbiness and comfort. Books are purchased through the Miami corporate office. There is no librarian or catalog. The books, loosely arranged by the author's last name, were taken on the honor system. The



library seated 31 readers and sleepers comfortably on fourteen red, white and brown leather chairs, some with ottomans and side tables, and four cloth-upholstered benches facing the sea. Weather permitting, passengers could read outside on a deck chair.

The books were not tired hand-me-downs, but a contemporary collection like you would find at Costco. Twelve shelves contained multiple copies of *New York Times* best sellers including *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Belknap Press, 2014) by Thomas Piketty, Elizabeth Warren's *A Fighting Chance* (Metropolitan Books, 2014)—she inscribed *As We Forgive Our Debtors: Bankruptcy and Consumer Credit in America* (Beard, 1999) to me when visiting Lincoln in 1990, and *Life is a Wheel: Love, Death, Etc., and a Bike Ride Across America* (Scribner, 2014) by *New York Times* obituary writer Bruce Weber. (I have a longstanding interest in long distance bicycle riding and obituary writing.) All of which I took to my cabin. I avidly read Warren's moving story.

Readers read for their own reasons: leisure, entertainment, escape, education, self-improvement, cabin fever, all of the above. I overheard a passenger saying, "I've got a wife somewhere." An ex-Navy Seal had more than twenty murder mysteries on his kindle. He admitted being obsessive; he can't put it down and reads one every two days. Good for him. My wife plucked a title by "serial novelist" Alexander McCall Smith that she had not read, curious considering she owns sixteen titles, five of which are signed. An occasional misty drizzle filled the library, proliferating iPhones, Nooks, Kindles, and tablets; some had their own books and some browsed the shelves. Our 21st century cruise ship, with hints of elitism, plied the Mediterranean, a waterborne grand tour. 📖

by Oliver B. Pollak,  
Omaha



*Interiors of the  
Oceania Riviera  
cruise ship library.*





# The NCB News



THE NEBRASKA  
CENTER FOR  
THE BOOK

an affiliate of  
the Library of Congress

c/o Nebraska Library Commission  
The Atrium  
1200 N Street, Suite 120  
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-2023  
34-00-12

**Nebraska Book Festival**  
**April 25**  
**bookfestival.nebraska.gov**

NONPROFIT  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 988  
Lincoln, NE

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DRIVE

*It's time to renew your NCB membership.*

President Mary Ellen Ducey recently sent out membership renewal reminders. Please show your support and send your check now to the Nebraska Center for the Book.

**Membership form on page 3.**

CURRENT RESIDENT OR:

## Calendar of Events:



View the complete  
Nebraska Literary  
Calendar at  
centerforthebook.  
nebraska.gov/  
get\_involved/calendar.  
html

<b>National Poetry Month</b> .....	April .....	Nationwide
Contact: <a href="http://www.poets.org">www.poets.org</a>		
<b>NE Writers Guild Spring Conference</b> .....	April 10-11 .....	LaVista
Contact: <a href="http://www.nebraskawriters.org/content/spring-conference">www.nebraskawriters.org/content/spring-conference</a>		
<b>WillyConXVII Science Fiction &amp; Fantasy Convention</b> .....	April 10-12 .....	Wayne
Contact: <a href="mailto:ScFanta1@wsc.edu">ScFanta1@wsc.edu</a> , <a href="http://wildcat.wsc.edu/clubs/willycon/">http://wildcat.wsc.edu/clubs/willycon/</a>		
<b>Bess Streeter Aldrich Foundation Spring Banquet</b> .....	April 18.....	Elmwood
Contact: Teresa Lorensen, 402-994-3855, <a href="mailto:tlorensen@windstream.net">tlorensen@windstream.net</a> , <a href="http://www.bessstreeteraldrich.org/events.html">http://www.bessstreeteraldrich.org/events.html</a>		
<b>Poetry of the Plains, with Twyla Hansen</b> .....	April 23.....	Hastings
Contact: 402-461-7343, <a href="http://humanitiesnebraska.org/speaker-events/poetry-of-the-plains/">http://humanitiesnebraska.org/speaker-events/poetry-of-the-plains/</a>		
<b>Nebraska Book Festival</b> .....	April 25.....	Omaha
Contact: Mary Ellen Ducey, <a href="mailto:mducey2@unl.edu">mducey2@unl.edu</a> , 402-472-5076 <a href="http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov">http://bookfestival.nebraska.gov</a> , <a href="http://www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival">www.facebook.com/NebraskaBookFestival</a>		
<b>40th Anniversary of the Fall of Saigon Commemoration</b> .....	April 30.....	Lincoln
Contact: Nate Blum, 402-802-1850, <a href="mailto:40thfos@gmail.com">40thfos@gmail.com</a> , <a href="http://40thFOS.org">http://40thFOS.org</a>		
<b>Center for Great Plains Studies Symposium: Standing Bear and the Trail Ahead</b> .....	May 14-15.....	Lincoln
Contact: 402-472-0602, <a href="mailto:cgps@unl.edu">cgps@unl.edu</a> , <a href="http://www.unl.edu/plains/2015-symposium">http://www.unl.edu/plains/2015-symposium</a>		
<b>60th Annual Willa Cather Spring Conference:</b> <b>"Fragments of Desire: Cather and the Arts"</b> .....	June 5-7.....	Red Cloud
Contact: Willa Cather Foundation, 866-731-7304, <a href="https://www.willacather.org/events/60th-annual-willa-cather-spring-conference">https://www.willacather.org/events/60th-annual-willa-cather-spring-conference</a>		
<b>"Free Land? 1862 and the Shaping of Modern America" Chautauqua</b> .....	June 9-10 .....	Alliance
<b>"Free Land? 1862 and the Shaping of Modern America" Chautauqua</b> .....	June 17-21 .....	Kearney
Contact: Nebraska Humanities Council, 402-474-2131, <a href="mailto:info@nebraskahumanities.org">info@nebraskahumanities.org</a> , <a href="http://NebraskaChautauqua.org">http://NebraskaChautauqua.org</a>		